

Wycombe Wanderers 5, Tooting & Mitcham 2

WYCOMBE WANDERERS' internal struggle for the top hots up! To Tooting and Mitcham's immense discomfort at Loakes Park on Saturday, Keith Searle deposed Tony Horseman as the season's leading scorer, by courtesy of a well-executed hat-trick.

But it was Bernie Bremer —when the result had already looked a formality—who claimed the goal of the afternoon with a brilliant solo dash, outshining all else.

Played on a pitch made none-too-easy by constant rainfall, the week-end's only Isthmian League fixture always tended Wycombe's way. Not, however, until after half-time did the breach show clearly.

Tooting's pressing injury problems ruled out a possible repeat of their earlier goalless draw under the Sandy Lane floodlights. There was neither the strength nor determination about the South Londoners' game to suggest they could blot out a Wycombe attack seeking to work off the frustrations from last week.

With Ted Powell enacting episode two of his performance as midfield maestro, Wanderers flowed smoothly into attack. Their opening goal, after only six minutes, was prompted by Bremer however.

He took up possession before slipping the ball to his right where Searle lay ready to carefully crack open the Tooting defence.

Four minutes later the visitors nudged back into the reckoning as a direct result of mis-timed clearances by Wycombe's rearguard. Ian Johnson punished the lapse by crashing home an equaliser.

A marked turning point came in the 16th minute when Barrett's header had John Maskell going the wrong way until the 'keeper flung an arm outwards to retrieve the situation.

The move, confirming that Tooting would take some conquering, almost cut Wanderers in two. But from then on, the South Londoners always strained to keep abreast of their opponents.

Tony Horseman never looked particularly happy about conditions underfoot, and was off target several times, including a classic miss after 33 minutes.

Having doggedly forced his route through the Tooting 'box', and with two visiting defenders sprawled hopelessly on their line, 'Bodger' sliced his shot across the goalface.

His effort and keenness could not be denied however. Nor could those of Geoff Anthony, brought back into the side to cover Barry Baker's absence.

By Mike Whitesman

All the Welshman's characteristic fight abounded. Yet, it seemed he had forfeited a pace or two in speed and fitness, due to his recent lack of senior team appearances.

Egged on by Powell, Wycombe were worth their 35th minute lead, gained from a movement worked on the right wing. Powell supplied the spade work while Searle made sure of a goal from in front of the net.

Tooting's Ede turned a Geoff Anthony header onto the crossbar from Searle's 42nd minute cross. But it was the

'keeper's own weak clearance that first set Wycombe up with the chance.

The woodwork at both ends figured prominently in the early stages of the second half. Maskell thankfully saw a Tooting shot hit a post within seconds, while in the 47th minute, Powell rocked the visitors' crossbar.

The subtle difference lay in what occurred afterwards though. For, if Tooting had failed to follow up their chance, Tony Horseman was not so slow, mercilessly pounding in the rebound of Powell's effort to put Wanderers 3-1 up.

Fifteen minutes later, with Tooting already dragged down by their half time decision to use more weight and less skill Wycombe sewed the points up.

From a corner, the ball found its way back to the deep lying Keith Blunt. He sent it high to the right flank, for Horseman to use. A pinpoint centre was met by Searle, whose header flashed goalwards just inside the left post, completing the centre forward's second hat-trick of the campaign.

Ironically his first, also scored at Loakes Park, came against those other Sandy Lane residents, Corinthian Casuals. The goal left Tooting hopelessly adrift and Searle one ahead in the scoring stakes over Horseman.

Lying third in that particular battle is Bernie Bremer, who also added to his tally via a tremendous one man affair, eight minutes away from full time. As direct as could be, he cruised through from the left and belted the ball no-nonsense fashion past Ede to make it 5-1.

Perhaps the score stood just a little unkindly for the visitors. But, into injury time Rodin cut back the deficit when Maskell could only half save a shot from Johnson, and the speedy left winger had an easy task to score.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: J. Maskell; P. Fuschillo, K. Blunt; E. Powell, J. Delaney, V. Faulkner; B. Bremer, G. Anthony, K. Searle, L. Pritchard, A. Horseman. Sub.: C. Gale (not used).

TOOTING & MITCHAM: B. Ede; P. Feeney, K. Baker, T. Yorke, A. Phillips, P. Webb; I. Johnson, C. Barrett, D. Hutchins, K. Jelly, D. Robin. Sub.: Smith (not used).

Referee: R. Finnerty (Thame).

Attendance: 2,235.

Half-time: 2-1. Goalscorers: Wycombe—Searle 3 (6, 35, 62), Horseman (47), Bremer (82). Tooting—Johnson (10), Rodin (2nd half injury time).

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE

Up to and including January 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sutton Utd	27	22	1	4	54	26	45
Wycombe W	23	17	3	3	58	20	37
Hendon	25	14	6	5	66	22	34
Enfield	25	14	5	6	34	15	33
Barking	28	15	3	10	68	38	33
Oxford City	26	13	7	6	46	27	33